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OPERALEX.ORG

FALL 2015

Enchanting evening

Director has long history with this modern classic

Some years ago on a rudimentary stage in a converted bus station at Sayre Upper School, student actress Lyndy Franklin lathered up with water and shampoo. In that school production of *South Pacific* she chose this realistic embellishment for Nellie Forbush's, "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outta My Hair."

This fall Lyndy, as co-director with her husband Jeromy Smith, must decide how her UK student actress will interpret that iconic song in the upcoming UKOT production of *South Pacific*.

As drama teacher at Sayre, it was my distinct pleasure to direct *South Pacific* featuring then-high-school-student Lyndy in the lead as Nellie. Her artistic dedication and enviable work ethic combined with her talent as dancer, singer, and overall performer unequivocally boosted the school's fledgling theater program.

Recently we met to reminisce about our Sayre experiences and explore why this musical is a good choice for UKOT.

She considers *South Pacific* a perfect fit for UKOT, both students and

See Page 2



Clark Davis

UKOT's Clark Davis vies for Miss America

UK opera fans will have a rooting interest in the September 13 Miss America Pageant as sophomore Clark Davis competes for the crown as Miss Kentucky.

Davis, a vocal performance major and student of Dr. Everett McCorvey, won the talent competition at the Kentucky pageant with her a cappella rendition of "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*. Earlier in the summer audiences at *It's a Grand Night for Singing* heard her sing a solo of musical selec-

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South Pacific

Where: Lexington Opera House

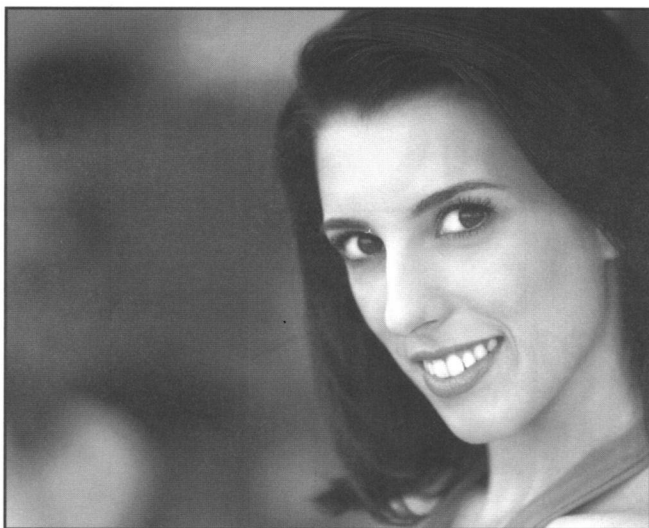
When: October 8, 9, 10 at 7:30 p.m.

October 10, 11 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: Call 859.233.3535 or go to www.lexingtonopera-house.com

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Lyndy Smith sang Nellie Forbush at Sayre School.

An opportunity to "honor the greatest generation"

From Page 1

program. "The soaring score will sound magnificent. Many productions of the show have used opera-trained singers," she said. Also, its timeless universal themes--such as prejudice and wartime romance--resonate with young actors. Plus, *South Pacific* contains "a great amount of unsung dialogue, which is an exciting challenge for the students."

Lyndy and Jeromy believe Rodgers and Hammerstein's work is as relevant today as it was at its 1949 premier, so they plan no modernistic interpretation of a work that needs no updating.

For Lyndy, the opportunity to direct this show allows her to "honor the greatest generation, among them my grandparents who told and re-told stories of events mirrored in this story." In her senior year of high school, she tackled a daunting independent project: writing, casting and directing a World War II-era play entitled *Letters*. I recall with admiration her dedicated efforts to create a scenario true to, and respectful of, that generation.

"My work in high school was supportive and informative, inspiring the dream for a future in theater, cultivat-

South Pacific's
timeless universal
themes resonate with
young audiences.

Rodgers & Hammerstein's
SOUTH PACIFIC
Music by Richard Rodgers
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
Book by Oscar Hammerstein II & Joshua Logan
October 8-11, 2015
Lexington Opera House
859.233.3535
UKOperaTheatre.org
SOUTH PACIFIC is presented through special arrangement with R&H Theatricals; www.rnh.com
Adapted from James A. Michener's Pulitzer Prize winning novel "Tales of the South Pacific"
#UKOT **f** **e** **o** **UK** **Opera** **THEATRE** **UK** **KENTUCKY** **Opera** **LEX**

ing a love for musical theater," Lyndy said. "That is the gift music and drama teachers at Sayre provided."

Lyndy also credits her mother, Opera House Program Director Luanne Franklin, with providing her from childhood with the artistic guidance and performance skills for her successful career path. In addition to performing on Broadway and across the country, she has co-written *Broadway Swings*, available for pre-order on Amazon.com. It "discusses the very important job of 'swings,' or understudies for the ensembles of shows in musical theater," Lyndy explained. "It's a skill set that is in demand for long-running shows and not often taught to aspiring performers."

Our fellow Kentuckian has returned, and we can look forward to her theatrical offerings. Wholeheartedly embracing the task before her with this production, Lyndy remains grateful for the opportunity. "Jeromy and I are honored that Dr. McCorvey is entrusting us with this important next step in UK's Opera Theater program. We believe audiences will love it!"

— Frankie VanderWier

From a basketball court to the Met

UK is getting ready to *Bounce!*

Bounce: The Basketball Opera is a collaboration among UKOT, Ardea Arts/Family Opera Initiative (NYC), Alaska Public Media, WNYC, Hunter College (NYC), The Parks Foundation (NYC) and Modell's Sporting Goods. This production will premier in Lexington November 12.

Bounce is the brainchild of stage director and Ardea Arts Founder, Grethe Holby. Dr. Everett McCorvey was part of a National Endowment for the Arts Panel where Alaska Public Media Director Torrie Allen mentioned the idea. "You can't produce an opera about basketball and not involve the University of Kentucky," McCorvey protested. *Bounce* is a powerful story about the soaring hopes, dreams and aspirations of Isaac "Ike the Flight" Harris, a young player who overcomes temptations and learns life's hard lessons. It addresses contemporary youth issues, including gun violence.

Auditions September 10, 11 and 12 are open to UK students, faculty, staff and the community. For more information go to: www.ukoperatheatre.org.

Metropolitan auditions return to UK

OperaLex will again host the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in Lexington this fall. Winners at the Kentucky District competition will advance to the Mid-South Regional Finals where they will compete for a chance to perform on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in Lincoln Center in New York.

This year's Kentucky District Auditions will be hosted by OperaLex at the Singletary Center's Recital Hall Saturday, November 7. The judges are renowned mezzo-soprano Jennifer Larmore, Dan Novak, director of the Ryan Opera Center of the Lyric Opera in Chicago and Marcus Kuchle from Cincinnati Opera. Sunday, November 8, Larmore will offer a master class in the Singletary Recital Hall. Professor Cliff Jackson will be the official accompanist for the events.

The starting time for each event will be determined by the number of entrants and will be announced later.

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Trading places: Miss Kentucky Clark Davis and UKOT program coordinator Joan Rue.

To deal with dyslexia "I started to sing"

From Page 1

tions from *Ragtime*.

Only 18 this August, Davis is a rising sophomore at UK. While she's been performing on stage since grade school, she only began her pageant career earlier this year when she won the title of Miss Horse Capital of the World.

Davis' career on the stage and with UKOT has served her well, though. Despite her youth, she's been praised for her poise onstage. Davis herself said she was in "a very calm place" at the Miss Kentucky Pageant.

Davis is a native of Lexington, where she graduated in 2014 from SCAPA at Lafayette High School. She was diagnosed with dyslexia in elementary school and has made awareness of that condition her pageant platform. Her dyslexia contributed both to her work ethic and her love of singing. With college in her sights, she knew she "needed to go above and beyond to get there. ... To get out that anxiety and frustration I started to sing."

Davis celebrated her Miss Kentucky win by having some cheesecake. And then she got back to work preparing for the Miss America Pageant. Despite the discipline and the competition, she says her goal is to "continue to sing, and let love and joy into my life." ~

Tune in Sunday, September 13 when ABC broadcasts the Miss America finals to cheer on this remarkable Kentucky, and UKOT, young woman.



André Campelo, standing, toured Brazil this summer with pianist Vagner Rosafa.

Brazilian art songs, *MacBeth*

Summer of learning, exploring

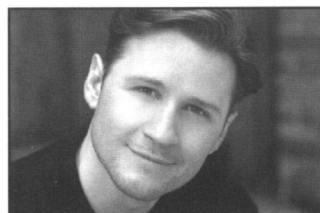
André Campelo

UKOT doctoral student André Campelo spent the summer in his native Brazil on an independent tour accompanied by a pianist and a video jockey who managed the virtual scenery projected for the show. He sang in 13 performances of the show *Lendas Indígenas e Afrobrasileiras* (*Indigenous and African-Brazilian Legends*), a mix of Brazilian art song, audiovisual, theatrical, and documentary elements.

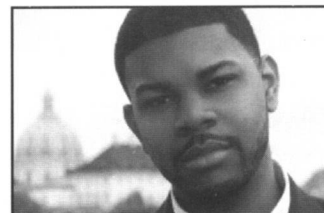
While on tour, "I noticed that I was going onstage and performing with much more confidence and poise than in the past," Campelo said.

He credits his time at UK for this improvement, which has "put me on the path of professionalism." Thanks to many performance opportunities, including in *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Tales of Hoffmann* and *Les Misérables*, "I learned to perform under pressure, which helped me develop mental toughness and confidence.

"I realized that all the hours of hard work eventually pay off. It is a long process for which you need patience and perseverance."



Turay



Bullock

Gregory Turay and Phillip Bullock

UKOT's Gregory Turay and alum Phillip Bullock spent part of their summer rehearsing *Macbeth* with Kentucky Opera for performances September 18 and 20 in Louisville.

Turay, a tenor, will appear as Macduff while Bullock, a baritone, will appear in the role of Doctor. Bullock is familiar to Central Kentucky opera goers from his numerous roles with UKOT, including the title role in *The Marriage of Figaro* in 2013. Bullock has since been performing around the country and the world, including engagements with the Royal Danish Opera, Green Mountain Opera Festival and Kentucky Opera.

Turay, a graduate of the UKOT program who won the Metropolitan Auditions as a UK student in 1995 and went on to perform at the Met as well as on opera stages around the world, returned to Lexington to earn his doctorate and teach a few years ago. He has performed in many UKOT productions since his return and was seen most recently in UKOT's *Tales of Hoffman* in the title role.

For more information or to obtain tickets go to kyopera.org.



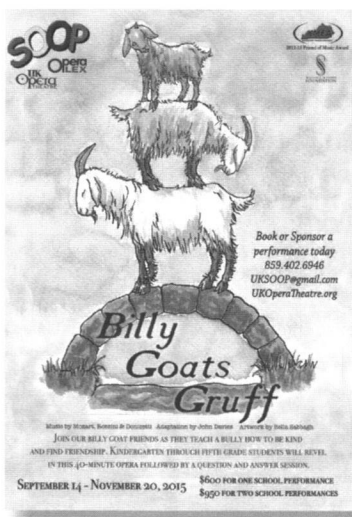
Operatic *Billy Goats Gruff* teaches children about opera and reforming a bully.

Teaching with, about opera

SOOP will bring *Billy Goats Gruff* to students in 80 performances

The Schmidt Opera Outreach Program (SOOP) is looking forward to another busy touring season this fall. The cast will present *Billy Goats Gruff* based on the fairy tale of the same name and adapted by John Davies. With scenes from operas by W. A. Mozart, G. Donizetti and G. Rossini, our goat friends teach a bully how to be kind and find friendship in this 40-minute opera tailored for kindergarten through fifth grade.

Under the stage direction of Gregory Turay and musical direction of Professor Cliff Jackson, the cast, including UKOT alums Natalie Minton and Jonathan Green, and newcomers Kelly Hamm, Taylor Comstock, and Savannah Etter, will begin traveling the state of Kentucky September 14 and will tour until November 20.



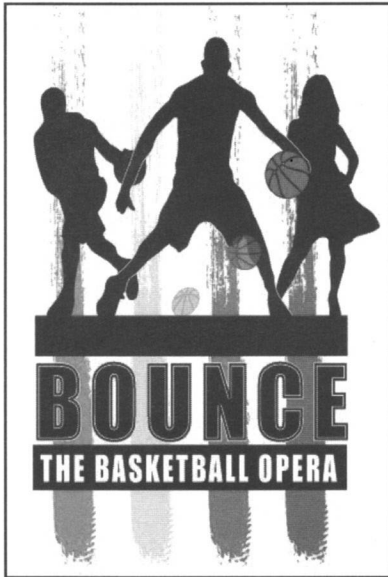
A generous gift and several additional sponsors are making it possible for SOOP to fulfill its mission to bring opera to every student in Kentucky by traveling to previously unreachable counties throughout the state. This season's goal is 80 performances during the 10-week tour. As of mid-August, SOOP is half way to its goal. If you or someone you know would like to sponsor a show at a specific location, please call Kathrin Thawley at 859-402-6946 or email uksoop@gmail.com.

You are cordially invited to a free public dress rehearsal at the University of Kentucky Medical Center, Pavilion A Auditorium Saturday, September 12 at 2 p.m.

Bring your young friends and enjoy the 2015 premiere of *Billy Goats Gruff*.

Happenings

Opera here, there, everywhere



Billy Goats Gruff

What: Schmidt Opera Outreach Program.

Where: University of Kentucky Medical Center, Pavilion A Auditorium.

When: Sept. 12, 2 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public.

October

South Pacific

Where: Lexington Opera House.

When: Oct. 8, 9, 10 at 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 10-11 at 2 p.m.

Cost: Ticketed event.

UK Vocal Competition for Young Singers

Where: Singletary Center.

When: Oct. 10 at 10 a.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public.

November

Metropolitan District Auditions

Where: Singletary Center.

When: Nov. 7. Time TBA.

Cost: Free and open to the public.

Metropolitan Opera Master Class

Where: Singletary Center.

When: Nov. 8 at 2 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public.

Bounce: A Basketball Opera

Where: TBA

When: Nov. 12, 13. Time TBA.

Cost: Ticketed event.

December

Amahl and the Night Visitors

Where: Lyric Theatre.

When: Dec. 11, 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Dec. 12 at 2 p.m.

Cost: Ticketed event.

Alltech Holiday Celebration of Song

Where: The Square.

When: Dec. 13 at 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Cost: Free and open to the public.

February

Così Fan Tutte

Where: Singletary Center.

When: Feb. 26, 27 at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 27, 28 at 2 p.m.

Cost: Ticketed event.

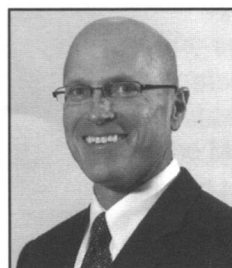
Remembering David Roth

Kentucky Opera general director David Roth, 56, died in an automobile accident on July 19 while returning to Louisville from a business and pleasure trip.

Dr. Everett McCorvey described Mr. Roth, who served the Louisville-based opera company for nine years, as "well known, well respected, and well loved" throughout the opera world.

Mr. Roth was also an important supporter of the students at the University of Kentucky, McCorvey said. "David was a true friend to UK Opera Theatre. UKOT was a fortunate partner with Kentucky Opera on many projects, including the Alltech Vocal Scholarship Competition, for which David served as a regular judge; the Kentucky Opera Young Artist Program, where many of our singers

received their first professional opportunities; and our most recent collaboration on the opera *Ainadamar* with



David Roth

Kentucky Opera and the Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra."

McCorvey said that at the time of Mr. Roth's death they had been having conversations about more collaborations between the two programs as well as UKOT singers auditioning for *Showboat* at Kentucky Opera and another soon-to-be-

announced opera.

"I will certainly miss him," McCorvey said. "He was one of opera's bright lights."

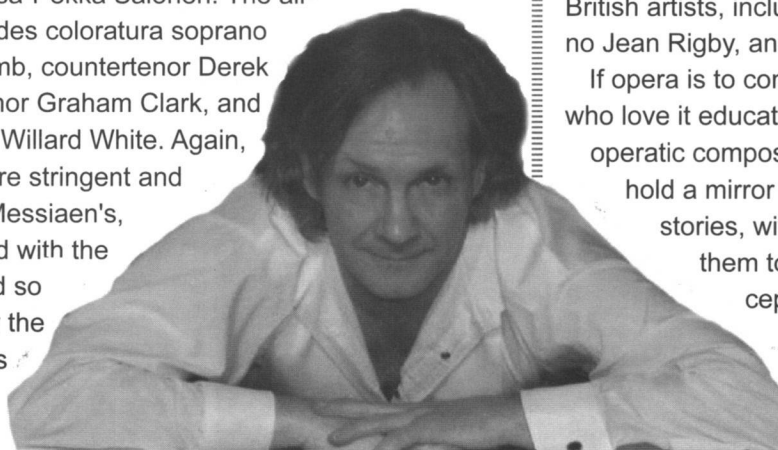
Holding a mirror to our times

By Tedrin Blair Lindsay, PhD

Despite trepidation that this could be my most unpopular column ever, I draw your attention to recordings of three contemporary European operas of astonishing power and complexity, and yes, even beauty, which will probably challenge your ears and possibly expand your musical tastes.

First, there is *Saint François d'Assise* (1983) by Olivier Messiaen, one of the two titans of mid-century French music along with Pierre Boulez. The medieval Saint Francis has always been one of my greatest heroes, and Messiaen's treatment of his life is reverent and rapturous, capturing both his mortified humanity and his ecstatic holiness in music of bracing excitement and rhapsodic other-worldliness. My favorite recording is the 1985 Salzburg performance conducted by Kent Nagano. It features the stars of the original production, bass-baritone José van Dam, strong and solemn in the title role, and the radiant soprano Dawn Upshaw as The Angel. Sit in an armchair with the libretto and follow the recording with the text, perhaps as a cultural alternative to church one Sunday. I can promise you an equivalent spiritual blessing if you do.

Next, I offer an opposite opera, Hungarian/Austrian composer György Ligeti's *Le Grand Macabre*, a nightmarish vision of apocalypse premiered in Stockholm in 1978, but revised based on later productions. The version I love is from a live 1997 Paris production with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by the dean of contemporary music conductors, Esa-Pekka Salonen. The all-star cast includes coloratura soprano Laura Claycomb, countertenor Derek Lee Ragin, tenor Graham Clark, and bass-baritone Willard White. Again, this score, more stringent and acerbic than Messiaen's, is best enjoyed with the libretto in hand so you can follow the crazy music as it depicts the



A little new music

Saint François d'Assise, Olivier Messiaen.

Deutsche Grammophon 445 176-2

Le Grand Macabre, György Ligeti.

Sony Classical S2K 62312

The Mask of Orpheus, Harrison Birtwistle.

NMC Recordings NMC D050

crazy story. Perfect for Halloween!

Finally I present the weirdest and most unusual of the three, British composer Harrison Birtwistle's *The Mask of Orpheus*, first performed by the English National Opera in 1986, but 15 years in the making. The libretto is more

a series of aesthetically pleasing but obtuse charts, graphs, and tables with poetic overlays than a drama in verse form. But, if you do peruse the "libretto" you will get a lot out of it, since it serves as the basis for Birtwistle's unusual compositional process involving mathematical equations, chance occurrences and improvisations, and other experimental methods for generating musical/textual performance. The achievement here is that the opera is gorgeous to the ear. Birtwistle's music is extremely lyrical, and since it serves to retell the myth of Orpheus, the greatest musician of them all, it stands to reason that the music pleases even while surprising. The recording I have is from a live 1996 performance by the BBC

Symphony Orchestra and Singers under the batons of Andrew Davis and Martyn Brabbins. The complexity of this work requires two conductors! The cast is a who's who of British artists, including tenor Jon Garrison, mezzo-soprano Jean Rigby, and baritone Alan Opie.

If opera is to continue to thrive, it is important that we who love it educate ourselves about the cutting edge of operatic composition and production. These three works hold a mirror to our times in the context of ancient stories, with art of great originality. If you allow them to resonate in an open mind and a receptive ear, their beauty and meaning will linger with you and captivate you, as they have me.

Dr. Lindsay

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